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June 17, 1953 DATE

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SUBJECT: Fortnightly Newsletter - June 1 - 16, 1953.

POLITICAL

Azikiwe, Awolowo Give Conditions for Attendance London Meetings

Nnamdi AZIKIWE and Obafemi AWOLOWO announced conditions under which they willing attend London meetings in re constitutional revision. Secretary of State for Colonies had asked Governor to invite thirteen Nigerians, including representatives NCNC, AG, NPC, NEPU, NIP and British Cameroons, to meetings in London. Zik and Awolowo replied that conference would be "sheer waste of time," and also objected to invitation of National Independence Party people. Governor asked them reconsider refusal attend. On June 15th they gave reply embodying conditions: invitation of fifteen - 5 from East (3 NCNC, 1 NIP, 1 from Cameroons); 5 from West (3 "government," 1 "opposition," 1 Oba); and 5 from North (3 "government," 1 "opposition," and 1 senior Chief). Also said conference must be for purpose discussing defects present constitution, not merely establishment techniques for revision.

Zik and Awolowo also made it clear they intend only revise constitution to make it workable until 1956. Leaders stated they would not participate in revision to attain entirely new constitution as present one last constitution conferring dependent status which they would tolerate. Said new constitution to be written in Nigeria, not in London.

Zik Stands for Eastern House Seat, May Go to Center

Answering question persisting since May dissolution Eastern House of Assembly, Azikiwe announces he to be candidate in Onitsha for seat in House. Kola BALOGUN, NCNC National Secretary, to contest for NCNC the Lagos seat in Western House vacated by Zik if latter wins Onitsha - which is almost sure. If Zik in Eastern House he will probably be assured position of leader Eastern Government.

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Government. His candidacy should, also, help bring independents and wavering candidates into NCNC fold as Zik's control of East looks certain.

Also reported that NCNC National Executive meeting Enugu week of June 8th agreed Azikiwe should go to central legislature and attempt get central ministerial portfolio. Report appears correct. Executive statement said NCNC leadership at center would assure party and national welfare. This is change from former attitude that he should stay outside both Regional and Central government - although former stand probably based on fact strength of opponents prohibited his holding such positions. Entire question Zik's participation Central government and question Zik vs. Awolowo at center obviously dependent upon question whether will be House of Representatives and Council of Ministers or not, and what will be composition central legislature.

Hon. Nwapa May Not Contest Eastern House Seat

The central Minister of Commerce and Industries, and a NIP leader, has announced he may not run again for membership Eastern House of Assembly. Hon C. NWAPA says he not sure it is worth the trouble to run for Regional legislature and maintain position at center when future form Nigerian government so uncertain. Fact is that Nwapa almost certain be defeated by NCNC in contest his district (Port Harcourt) and will, thereby, lose his seats in Eastern House and House of Representatives, as well as central portfolio.

His party, NIP, campaigning hard for seats in forthcoming elections to Eastern House. ConGen feels chances for this party seriously challenge Eastern NCNC or to achieve desired North-South reconciliation very slim.

NPC Invites All Northern Parties to Convention

Northern People's Congress has invited members all Northern parties to Kaduna convention for June 25th. Important item on agenda is discussion various proposals for revision present constitution. Northern leaders have kept quiet in re recent exchanges between Governor and leaders NCNC and AG.

Inter-Territorial Conference in Lagos

Second session of West African Inter-Territorial Conference scheduled June 16th to 18th in Lagos. Nigeria to be represented by Ministers of Social Services and Natural Resources, with Hon. Akoi ARIKPO as alternate. Agenda to include pensionable status

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of staff of West African Research Institute, financial position of West African Cocoa Research Institute, and financing of proposed West African Council for Medial Research.

Fear of Taxation Hinders Eastern Census and Investigations

Traditional Nigerian fear of being taxed and ingenuity at avoiding same has plagued census-takers in the East and investigators of corruption in Onitsha. Market women in several Easternt towns have violently resisted being counted for census and many have fled to hide in "bush." Women do not believe government statements counting not for new taxes. So-called Hill Commission having difficulties in official investigation corruption in Onitsha Town Council. When Mr. Hill visited huge town market to gather evidence he found it almost empty, the traders having fled from what they thought was something to do with taxation. Little doubt Onitsha government, like dozens other towns', riddled with corruption; but difficult to prove. Onitsha Council now almost inoperative as result maladministration.

Nigerian Convention People's Party Holds Assembly

CPP called Lagos assembly June 15th to discuss present constitutional uncertainty and possibilities setting up constituent assembly. Nineteen agencies reported represented, including political parties, labor unions and market womens' organizations. Neither NCNC nor Action Group represented. Mr. A. OGUN, Propaganda Secretary of AG, termed it "ridiculous" that CPP would attempt such thing when party not even established firmly yet. Meeting is brainchild of Adewale THOMPSON, Lagos lawyer arrested for illegal assembly during Coronation holidays.

Kano Riot Inquiry Asked

Non-Moslem criticisms Kano authorities in connection recent riots has led to demand by residents the Sabon Gari at Kano that Lt.-Governor (North) investigate conduct Native Authorities during disturbances. Petitioners claim N. A. police actually assisted Moslems in attacks on Southerners. Also claim authorities allowed march of mob from Birnin City (2½ miles away) to attack Sabon Gari. Since riot Southerners have persistently blamed authorities for allowing riots begin.

Lagos Slum Clearance Program Suspended

Lagos' Slum Clearance and Housing Schemes have been indefinitely suspended, primarily through lack of funds. The Nigerian Government and Western Regional Governments have not

been able

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been able to agree which shall sponsor the projects, thus leaving Lagos Executive Development Board without funds needed (about £1 million). Solution not expected until final results official investigation Lagos government finances, and funds not assured at all.

ECONOMIC

Nigerians Warned on Inferior Cocoa

Nigerian Produce Marketing Company, Ltd., London, outlet for Nigerian Marketing Boards' goods, has informed director of Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board that foreign buyers threaten cessation purchases Nigerian cocoa unless inferior and short weight cocoa shipments cease. U.S. and U.K. buyers strongest complainants. London marketing agency reminded that claims against local Marketing Board had cost Board thousands of pounds. Losses per ton, on quality, have run as high as £12.12s.0d and short weight losses to £6 per ton. Experience shows almost all bad cocoa shipments originated in Lagos buying station; for this reason Board plans close Lagos for buying during next season. Official control this abuse most difficult because proven vulnerability to bribes of even highest ranking Nigerian graders and inspectors. Inspection all shipments by non-Nigerians not feasible due official policy of "Nigerianization" of official agencies.

Onitsha Town Council Hinders City Electrification

Council rejected Electricity Corporation proposal that only four sections of town be wired for street lights now, leaving rest for later. Lack sufficient power and uneconomic character unscheduled sections was reason for partial electrification. Council said, in effect, "we want whole town lighted, or none at all." Considered very likely they get none at all.

Produce Sales Taxes In Effect from July 1, 1953

Nigerian Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board to suspend oil and kernel purchases from June 25 to July 2, 1953 in North and West in preparation collection produce sales tax from July 1st. Suspension purchasing will allow grading all stocks on hand at buying stations - which are not subject to tax. Eastern Region purchases ommitted from tax due failure Eastern House of Assembly act on any legislation in past session.

Erwin P. Keeler

ERWIN P. KEELER
AMERICAN CONSUL GENERAL